

575 their husbands; (3) each prospective buyer has a partner (formerly these
554 were bachelors, often not more than boys, whose families were willing and
[754] able to "see them through"); (4) members of the Horn are the most feared
[837] group among the Blood (those who buy the "painted root"¹²⁸ can sorcerise,
[577] but even the lesser members, it is believed, have power "so great that to
wish anyone ill or dead is all that is needed for realization"¹²⁹); (5) adultery,
a great tension point in the culture, is sanctioned in the Horns (individual
sorcery power can only be acquired after the seller has had ceremonial
intercourse with the buyer's wife); (6) jealousy is proscribed (self-control
for the Blood is difficult at best, but its achievement by members of the
Horn brings great social approval); (7) the Horns are now the oldest ranking
society. Those who have been through it can go no further, but many can
and do rejoin it.

Of the 130 who have been members at some time,

61 have bought in once
33 have bought in twice
22 have bought in three times
11 have bought in four times
1 has bought in six times
2 have bought in eight times.

575 Despite Catholic injunctions against joining the Horns (because of the
424 ceremonially sanctioned adultery), and despite the lack of interest on the
● [798] part of those without horses, the demand for Horn bundles seems to be
[837] greater than the supply. While others find no bidders or are falling in value
[435] (the Long Time Pipe which sold for a hundred and for fifty horses at an
earlier time, sold for twenty in 1939), the leader's lance of the Horn Society
that same year brought fourteen horses and much goods, the approximate
cost.¹³⁰ Wissler quoting a Piegan's statement made shortly after 1910 writes:

575 Bad-old-man bought into the mosquitoes while he was quite young but after his
424 marriage. This was before the pigeons were started. For this membership he paid
432 a gun and clothing. At the end of four years he sold out and joined the braves at a
cost of some blankets and clothing. After three years he sold his membership in the
braves and bought into the all-brave-dogs. Now, it happened that he purchased
this membership from his own son-in-law and he gave as the purchase price his
youngest daughter. After three years he sold his membership in the all-brave-dogs
and purchased a place in the front-tails, paying a horse. After four years he sold out
and purchased into the raven-bearers for which he paid a horse. The next summer he

[824] ¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 413. Wissler calls this prairie-turnip.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 411.

¹³⁰ Harry D. Biele notes that twenty-two horses were promised but that considerably fewer were delivered.

The turnover in these important pipes and bundles is not great and prices fluctuate considerably.¹⁷³ The man who has paid a large number of horses is frequently loathe to relinquish his bundle for fewer animals. It was many years before the last buyer to pay a hundred horses for the Long Time Pipe was ready to let it go for fifty. The woman who bought the *natoas* bundle in 1929 put up ten horses, one heifer, a set of harness and a saddle. In 1939, she still owned the bundle.¹⁷⁴

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The initial expense, however, is but a small part of the total cost. Further ritual knowledge enhances the value of the bundle, but while this may bring a good return in the future, it must be paid for in the present. Moreover, the owners of certain bundles are expected to open them and feast all previous owners sometimes as often as once a month. For some these additional obligations are too onerous. All four owners of beaver bundles participate in the general ceremony, but only one possesses the knowledge necessary to conduct it. His bundle is considered the most powerful.¹⁷⁵

All bundle owners are members of societies, but five, each of whom had purchased only one bundle, did not join the Horns. Pressure from the Church, the loss of horses, or the complete acceptance of white goals may account for this unusual behavior. Whatever the reasons for these particular lapses, it is also an interesting fact and an index of changing values that the sons of bundle owners and society members have not always followed in their fathers' footsteps. They have not always joined societies or purchased ceremonial objects.

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Those who buy ceremonial privilege consider the gain against the cost. When Harvey Fleet Foot, a young and ambitious farmer, was at "death's door" shortly after the serious illness of his small son, he dreamed that he should vow a pipe. Only then would he and his family be protected from further harm. Since no special pipe was mentioned in the dream, he sought advice from an old medicine man and Horn priest, his father's brother, and from his father-in-law, a substantial cattle and horse owner and farmer. The two old men agreed to back Harvey, "if he followed the voices of the spirit." They decided that he should vow the Long Time Pipe. Said the medicine man, "As long as you can pay for it, you might as well vow the strongest pipe." And Harvey Fleet Foot, aided by his rich father-in-law, bought the Long Time Pipe for twenty horses and other goods.

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¹⁷³ Bradley (*Characteristics*, p. 265), writing before 1877, comments, "In value they were computed at about nine horses." Lewis (*Effects of White Contact*, p. 44 ff.), basing his conclusions on Major Culbertson believes that before 1850 "the number of bundle transfers was less frequent and the property exchanged much smaller." Wissler (*Blackfoot Bundles*, p. 277) writes: "... whereas... medicine pipes formerly required but two or three horses, they now often go to thirty head."

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¹⁷⁴ Harry D. Biele, Field Notes.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

ried a young warrior named Scraping White, who 551
already had one wife and three children. When
Scraping White's oldest daughter saw her new
little brother she told her mother, "I like my new [553]
brother—I want his name to be Napi." So he was
called Napi, "Old Man." Many years later he
took the name of his original father, Wolf Old
Man. On the tribe records his name is Willie [874]
Scraping White, and it was by this name that he
was called during the three years that he attended
the Calgary Industrial School in the 1890s.

"No, I didn't get much schooling at that 874
place," he once told us, "because the instructors
thought that a fellow my size would be more use
to them out in the fields than in the classroom.
I'm glad," he said with a smile, "because I liked
the outdoors much better than the insides of
buildings." The Old Man speaks only very broken [191]
English and he never did learn to read or write. [212]
But he did become the school's star football
player. He used to tuck his long braids up under [526]
his helmet. "When I came back to the reserve the
kids wanted me to teach them how to play, and [302]
the girls sure admired me when I passed the ball a
long ways," he said with a combined look of pride [554]
and embarrassment. He was usually too modest to
tell of his personal accomplishments. Unfortu-
nately, several accidents while playing football
and ice hockey weakened his knees. "Better to
have weak knees than a weak mind," he some-
times said to console himself. After three years in
the school's fields he finally decided to ask how
much longer he would have to stay. "I never knew
that I was allowed to ask the principal such a
question," he said, "so I felt pretty foolish when
he told me that I was free to go whenever I
wanted. I packed up pretty fast and left." He was [797] ●
also one of the first students at St. Paul's Anglican
School, on the Blood Reserve, though he did not [873]
stay long.

The Old Man learned much about our Old 115
Ways from his stepfather, Scraping White, who 793
was Owner of many sacred Medicines and knew

ing the 1892 Okan, the agents sent word to the
People that participants in self-torture would
henceforth be jailed. They aroused outside back-
ing for their move by calling the ceremonies
"heathen rituals." The missionaries hoped that
this ban would lead to an end of the Medicine
Lodge ceremony itself. However, Medicine
Lodges continued to be built. Self-torture vows
were carried out in places that were not so public.

In writing and with his camera, Wilson re-
corded the details of the last ceremonies to fulfill
self-torture vows:

Next day nothing occurred until afternoon,
when some members of two Societies, "Crazys"
[Wilson's own name for the Crazy Dogs, who
were not actually crazy in any way] and "Black
Soldiers," came out of their rows. At this, Sitting
Bull's son entered in the paint garb of the "self-
torture" as follows: no clothing except breach
cloth and a blanket wrapped about him. A wreath
of wild sage about the head, a ring of same about
each arm and ankle. Painted with white dirt from
head to foot. He sat down upon his blanket and
presently some one placed a pillow and quilt on
the ground upon which he laid down. A man
assisted by others put a skewer in each breast and
a 3rd [behind] one shoulder. When he arose to
his feet a shield was fastened to the skewer in the
back and the ropes from top of centre pole, to the
others [on his breasts]. He walked up and em-
braced the centre pole and silently prayed. Then
[he] went back until the ropes tightened and,
reaching around behind, grasped the shield, tore
it from his flesh with a jerk and cast it upon the
ground. Giving a yell, he next caught hold of one
of the ropes in each hand and gave them a couple
of good jerks which pulled the skin out from his
breast several inches each jerk. Then he threw
back his full weight upon the ropes, having first
inserted a whistle in his mouth, the string of it
depending from around the neck. The drums
started up and the boy danced in time to their

[p. 38-A]

six-strip canvas tent (many of our People still lived year-around in tents and tipis back then), a plow, and enough food to get him started. 773 778 [657]

By the time Wings vowed to take our sacred Pipe, his farm was operating well, and he had already paid off the agent's loan. But after he made his payments for the Bundle, he didn't have enough horses left to haul a wagon. Besides, the wagon itself had been included as part of the payment. For him, the sacrifice had been considerable. [426] [342] [432] [511]

The next Owner of our Bundle was Bob Black Plume, also known as Apikayi, or "Skunk." He was given the name by his grandmother, who used the Power of that animal in her doctoring. He was a regular leader of our sacred ceremonies until recently, when he decided to give all his devotion to the Full Gospel Church. [551] [553] [755] [797]●

Bobtail Chief was the leader of the ceremony during which our Pipe was transferred from Laurie Plume, or Otter, to our Old Man. The Old Man kept it for ten years, then gave it as a present to his son-in-law, Bob First Charger. The Old Man was then mourning the death of his wife. [431] [765]

SiksiAki was first in the presence of the Pipe when our Old Man had it. She was just a little girl when Grandma AnadaAki and her husband, Ben Strangling Wolf, took her along to the Old Man's spring Thunder ceremony. Although SiksiAki was then quite young, her memories add to the spirit the Bundle now has for us. [852]

THE DIFFERENT-PEOPLE PIPE

One of our remaining Medicine Pipe Bundles has been with our People since the year 1833. Some ethnologists have called this Bundle the Gros Ventre Pipe and even the Long-Time Pipe. Among our People it is known as NamaTappi-Achkuineman, or the "Different-People Pipe." It was brought here from the Mandan tribe. 778 [177]

Our head chief at the end of the Buffalo

[p. 156-B]

Bundle he wanted told him, "I'm not giving up
my membership to no white man!" Through a
more sympathetic member, he was able to join
the Horns. But others resented him because he
dared to question things they had simply ac-
cepted. In the Old Days his aggressive character
would have helped him become a powerful
leader; but in the twentieth century most of our
People have been mainly interested in quietly car-
rying on the remnants of our Old Ways. George's
efforts to accomplish what might have helped
continue the Old Ways were casually ignored by
some and harshly rejected by others.

For many years, George countered his social
failures with alcohol and stealing. Though he
knew as much as anyone about the Old Ways, he
felt that he was not living the successful life he
deserved from all his years of learning and devo-
tion. A few years ago he began embracing his new
religion, which gave him the strength to give up
evil ways. A sticker on the back of his truck reads:
JESUS LOVED THE DEVIL OUT OF ME. To him the
devil now includes many of our Old Ways, as well
as his own ways with liquor and theft. Although
his lifetime of leadership training helped him be-
come a minister of his new religion, all the spe-
cific Indian Teachings were of no use to him
"after he became a white man" as his wife says.
But George's knowledge has not gone to waste.

Not long ago, the Alberta Provincial Mu-
seum and Archives realized that the knowledge
and customs among our People would be lost for-
ever unless they were recorded. This would be
difficult, however, as the Blood People have long
been known for their unwillingness to talk to out-
siders about our Old Ways; some subjects, such as
the Horns Society and the Motokiks, are never
discussed at all. This was no problem for George
First Rider. He had the knowledge of the Old
Ways and no longer felt restricted to talk about
them. Moreover, he felt he deserved some com-
pensation for all the payments made to his
Teachers and all the years devoted to learning the

a granary, drilled a hole in the wall, and the grain poured out into my wagon. I spent the money on liquor.

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Eventually the day came when I went broke. I went to jail and my wife shackled up with other men. I had eleven children and they went away while I was in jail. The things I stole, which made me act like a rich man, they all vanished. When I got out of jail I had no place to stay. No one cared for me. They knew I was a drunkard and that I had lived a bad life.

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But now I pray to God. I quit smoking, I quit drinking, and I quit stealing. I became a Christian. I have a new wife. I pray with her and I don't find life so hard.

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MY DAD, HIS NAME IS DOG CHILD

Oki, I am First Rider. Now I am going to tell about my father and mother. My father's childhood name was Singing Amongst. When he grew older, he got a different name. A girl who lived with my father's father, she was a relative, she strung duck beaks and duck legs and tied them around my father's neck. Thus, he became known by the name Duck Necklace.

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My father's father was Holy Descent; my father's mother was Under Making Noise. There were four sons: Striped Wolf, the eldest; then my father, Duck Necklace; after him, Mistaken Chief; and the youngest was Shoot at Close Range. Holy Descent was ninety-seven years old when he died; he didn't winter the three [didn't live the final three years to become a hundred].

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That old man, my grandfather, as the time came, he told his relatives exactly when he would die. "When Morning Star comes up, then I will depart from you." He prepared himself for his death. He put on his good shirt, a thick, spleen-colored material. He put on his coat, a Hudson's Bay blanket, and his leggings, made from a Hudson's Bay blanket. He put his fine-cut tobacco and his pipe beside him. Then he began to tell

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21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
NF6 Blackfoot NF6
Blood



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Important men on the Blood Reserve around 1886. From left to right: the chief, One Spot; the head chief, Red Crow; interpreter Dave Mills; missionary Cowan; and, in the chair, agent Pocklington. (Glenbow Archives)

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[p.238-B]

21: Hungry Wolf F-4,5 (ca. 1972) 1977
 NF6 Blackfoot NF6
 Blood



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Atsitsina with his parents, Natosina and SikskiAki. He is wearing a blanket coat and holding a pipe bag. Natosina holds a buffalo tail whisk, which he uses for fanning himself and for sweat bathing.

brought with her an infant son, Jack Low Horn. With Natosina she soon had another son, who is our uncle, Atsitsina. For a short time Natosina had three wives, all related, but the youngest one died without having children.

Old SikskiAki was given her name, "Black-Faced Woman," because of her dark skin. In spite of that, she had blue eyes. Her mother, Blonde Big Nose, also blue-eyed, had been part French and part Mexican. Her father (Atsitsina's great-grandfather) had been a French trader also known as Bill, who was noted for having very long red hair. Old SikskiAki's father was a Blood named White Crane.

Natosina was the leader of every kind of Sacred Ceremony—Medicine Pipe, Beaver Bundle, Horns Society, Nighttime, and Medicine Lodge. He was a noted doctor and spiritual advisor. His war records include twenty-two different raids, on which he killed seven enemy men and captured well over one hundred horses. Like many Old People he was baptized into the Catholic Church in a mass ceremony that was explained

[p. 256-A]

to them as a blessing from the holy white man, as
priests are called in Blackfoot. Not long before his
death, when a relative volunteered to go for a
priest, he picked up a cup and said to those with
him, "In this cup is my Catholic religion." He
slowly turned the cup upside down and sat it
down on the table, without saying another word.

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Natosina's brother, Big Snake, died around
1915. He was well known among all the Blackfoot
People for being both fearless and reckless. Be-
cause his parties always returned successfully, he
had a large following whenever he announced
plans to leave on a raid. Experienced older men,
however, seldom went with him because he was
so wild. They preferred the company of more
serious and conscientious men.

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One man who knew old Natosina was the
writer James Willard Schultz. He lived with the
Piegiens for many years, beginning in the 1870s.
He learned the Blackfoot language, went on bu-
falo hunts and war raids, and was known as Api-
kunni, or "Far-off-Scabby-Robe." He left the Pie-
giens in 1903, after the death of his wife, but came
back to visit often and wrote many fine stories
about the Old Days. In the 1920s he recorded a
few adventures of his Blood friends, who included
Natosina and old Weasel Tail. I read Apikunni's
story to Atsitsina, who had not heard it for many
years. He said that most of the details in it are
correct and that it is a good version of the way his
dad used to relate this adventure. I will give you
the story in Apikunni's words—he writes it as
though old Natosina were speaking.

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EAGLE PLUME

One beginning-of-summer-time, when we Ka'ina
were encamped on Belly River, close up to the
Backbone [the Rocky Mountains, the "Backbone
of the Earth"], I called upon nine men, good
warriors all of them, to go with me on a raid
south; a raid upon the Crows. Before leaving, we
built a sweat lodge of good size, and asked Three

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